THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTIR OF STATE IN THE MINESTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR. AHMED): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Docs not arise.

Foreign equity in mining Shipping and Agriculture

898. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD: SHRI GAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to allow 51 percent cent foreign equity in mining, shipping and agriculture; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Docs not arise.

Decrease in indirecdt tax collections

899. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD: SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the indirect tax collection fell short of target consider ably; and

(b) if so, the details and reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (b) The revenue collections from indirect taxes consisting of customs and excise duties during April, 1993—January, 1994 have declined by 3.25% (Provisional) over the collections made during April, 1992—January, 1993. The shortfall in the revenue is maily attributed to sluggish growth in manufacturing sector and imports.

Interim relief to Central Government Employees and Pensioners

900. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to increase the grant of interim relief to Central Government employees and pensioners with effect from 1st January, 1994;

(b) if so, by when the decision is likely to be taken and payment made; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor, indicating the amount/date of last of last such relief given to Central pensioners?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) and (c) Based on the conclusions reached at the meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Council of the joint Consultative Machinery, interim relief of Rs. 100/- per month has been sanctioned to all Central Government employees with effect from 16.9.93. Interim Relief has not been sanctioned to the pensioners. There is no proposal to increase the interim relief given to the Central Government emoloyees or sanction interim relief to pensioners.

Increase in bank frauds

901. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item "Many bank branches in city defrauded" which appeared in 'Times of India, Mumbai of the 7th January, 1994;

(b) whether if is a fact that the interstate bank fraud is on increase since last three years;

(c) what is total amount involved in such cases during last three years bank-wise; and